

**FACT SHEET**

Site Name: Rockaway Borough Well Field

Location: Rockaway Borough, Morris County

Description:

The Rockaway Borough Well Field site is located in Rockaway Borough in Morris County, New Jersey. Three municipal wells were contaminated with volatile organic compounds, including trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene, from an unknown source. The groundwater from which the wells draw their water is the sole source of potable water for Rockaway Borough, serving approximately 10,000 people. There is no evidence of surface water contamination, but the potential for contamination exists due to the close proximity of the wells to the Rockaway River.

The Borough has installed granular activated carbon filters on its potable water system in 1981. A September 1986 Record of Decision confirmed this treatment as satisfactory, established that the Borough would continue to maintain the system, and mandated that a supplemental remedial investigation and feasibility study would attempt to identify contamination sources.

A supplemental remedial investigation and feasibility study to identify the sources of groundwater contamination, and to develop and evaluate remedial alternatives, is in progress. This work is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 1991.

Planned Activities:

- Finalization of the remedial investigation report and the feasibility study report
- Issue proposed plan
- Continuation of the potentially responsible party search

Issues:

EPA is unable to reimburse the Borough of Rockaway for the implementation of carbon filtration on its potable water system since the related expenditures did not occur during the CERCLA "window" period and further were initiated without prior approval from EPA.

The CERCLA "window" period includes the years 1978 to 1980. Under certain circumstances, costs incurred during this time period may be counted as a credit towards the costs of future response actions at a site. Prior approval, on the other hand, addresses reimbursement more directly (rather than a credit towards future costs). EPA can pre-authorize or provide approval

of specific remedial actions with the intent of reimbursing the costs of such actions. The Borough had not requested approval prior to installing the water treatment system. In fact, it was not until 1983 that Borough officials first inquired about the possibility of reimbursement. At that time, Jack McGraw (signing for Lee Thomas, Assistant Administrator) responded to the Borough's inquiry and formally notified officials that costs incurred for the water treatment system were not eligible for reimbursement. Independently, the Borough is pursuing legal actions against potentially responsible parties to recover costs incurred by the Borough for the installation of the existing treatment system and for the installation of future treatment systems.

Recently, EPA has received requests from both the Borough and Congressman Gallo to amend the 1986 ROD or to issue an explanation of significant difference to formally change the selected remedy from carbon adsorption to air stripping followed by carbon adsorption. The Borough believes that modifying the treatment without formal EPA approval could present a legal impediment in their effort to obtain reimbursement from responsible parties.

While the installation of an air stripping system would appear to be a desirable modification, under CERCLA, as amended, EPA can not assist the Borough in this undertaking because it is being performed for operation and maintenance cost efficiency.